

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----083625 041455Z /41

R 040916Z AUG 77
FM AMCONSUL BOMBAY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7528
INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BOMBAY 1878

EXDIS

USIAEA

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: MNUC, TECH, IN
SUBJ: NYE VISIT TO BOMBAY: DISCUSSION WITH DEPARTMENT OF
ATOMIC ENERGY

REF: BOMBAY 1848

1. SUMMARY: BOMBAY DISCUSSIONS OF NYE, SIEVERING AND VAN
DOREN WERE MARKED BY SAME CORDIALITY AND OPENNESS THAT CHAR-
ACTERIZED BSPO

TALKS PREVIOUS DAY. DEPARTMENT OF
ATOMIC ENERGY SCIENTISTS WERE KEENLY INTERESTED IN EXPOSITION
OF NEW U.S. POLICY AND PROSPECTIVE LEGISLATION. AS IN NEW
DELHI, NYE STRESSED CENTRAL ROLE OF INFCEP AND OUR HOPES
FOR IT, AS WELL AS KEY ROLE OF FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS IN BOTH
INTERNATIONAL AND U.S. BILATERAL COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS. INDIANS
QUESTIONED HIM CLOSELY AS TO HOW SAFEGUARDS WOULD EFFECT BOTH
THEIR RESEARCH AND POWER PROGRAMS. THEIR QUERIES FOCUSED ON
DEFINITION AND EXTENT OF SAFEGUARDS, POSSIBLE INDIAN ROLE IN
INFCEP, PROSPECGS FOR U.S. APPROVAL OF REPROCESSING U.S.
SUPPLIED FUEL AT TARAPUR (NYE GAVE NO ENCOURAGEMENT FOR
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EARLY APPROVAL), STATUS OF JAPANESE-US TALKS ON REPROCESSING
OF US FUEL IN JAPAN AND URGENT NEED FOR HELP WITH INDIA'S
CRITICAL SPENT-FUEL STORAGE PROBLEM. IN RARE GESTURE, IAEC
CHAIRMAN SETHNA PERSONALLY ESCORTED NYE ON LONG TRIP TO
TARAPUR REACTOR AND ALSO ON VISIT TO BHABA RESEARCH CENTER
AT TROMBAY. IN WARM, LENGTHY PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS, SETHNA
CONFIRMED TO NYE THAT IAEC WILL UNDERTAKE FRESH EXAMINATION

OF FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS TO DETERMINE WHETHER THEY CAN BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT SERIOUS ADVERSE EFFECT ON INDIA'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM. END SUMMARY.

2. NYE GROUP HAD FOUR HOUR MEETING ON AUGUST 2 WITH DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (DEA) OFFICIALS LED BY INDIAN ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION CHAIRMAN HOMI SETHNA, DIRECTOR BHABA ATOMIC RESEARCH CENTER, DR. RAJA RAMANNA, AND ATOMIC POWER AUTHORITY CHAIRMAN, DR. J.C. SHAH. MEA SECRETARY, M.S. VELLODI, CAME DOWN FROM DELHI AND PARTICIPATED ACTIVELY IN THE TALKS. THE INDIAN SCIENTISTS WERE KEENLY INTERESTED IN HAVING A FULL EXPLANATION OF THE NEW US NUCLEAR POLICY, EXPLORING WAYS IN WHICH IT WOULD AFFECT INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, AND PARTICULARLY IN ASSESSING ITS IMPACT ON THEIR COOPERATIVE PROGRAM WITH US. NYE EXPLAINED ITS GENESIS, EMPHASIZING PRESIDENT CARTER'S COMMITMENT TO REDUCE THE NUCLEAR THREAT WHILE MOVING AHEAD WITH PEACEFUL USES OF THE ATOM AND AGAIN NOTED THAT OUR PRESIDENT AND THEIR PRIME MINISTER SHARE A MORAL REPUGNANCE OF NUCLEAR ARMS. NYE EXPLAINED THE CENTRAL ROLE WE ENVISION FOR INFCEP IN COMING TO GRIPS WITH THE PROBLEMS POSED BY THE NEXT GENERATION OF POWER REACTORS. VAN DOREN EXPLAINED STATUS OF US LEGISLATION AND NOTED THAT WE HOPE IT WILL ALLOW TWO YEARS TO WORK OUT ARRANGEMENTS FOR APPLICATION OF FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS, WHICH WILL BE ESSENTIAL TO THE CONTINUATION OF OUR BILATERAL COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS. IN DISCUSSING SAFEGUARDS, INDIANS MUCH MORE INTERESTED IN INFORMING THEMSELVES OF
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NATURE OF US LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS THAN IN POINTING UP POTENTIAL PROBLEM OF APPLYING THEM IN INDIA WHEN MILITARY FACILITIES IN WEAPONS STATES ARE NOT COVERED BY PROGRAM.

3. INFCEP. SETHNA CONFIRMED THAT DAE GENUINELY INTERESTED IN JOINING IN THIS EXERCISE AND HOPED IT COULD BE ORGANIZED IN WAY THAT WOULD FACILITATE INDIA'S PARTICIPATION. HE MENTIONED NO PROBLEM IN CONNECTION WITH APPROACH CENTERING AROUND WORKING GROUPS WITH CO-CHAIRMEN MEETING AS STEERING BOARDS TO GUIDE AND COORDINATE EXERCISE. RAMANNA EMPHASIZED THAT EACH GROUP WOULD HAVE TO CONSIDER PROBLEM IN BROAD SPECTRUM, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT BIG NUCLEAR PROGRAMS AS WELL AS SMALL ONES AND DEVELOPED NUCLEAR PROGRAMS AS WELL AS NEW ONES. COSTS WOULD BE A PROBLEM IF CO-LEADERS EXPECTED TO BEAR AND SHARE EQUALLY EXPENSES OF SUCH BROAD-SCALE STUDY. SETHNA PROMISED TO FORWARD HIS VIEWS TO MEA ON US WORKING PAPER ON INFCEP. HE SAW NO PROBLEM WITH INITIAL CONFERENCE IN OCTOBER, HOSTED BY US, BUT AGREED THAT INFCEP WORK SHOULD BE CLOSELY COORDINATED WITH IAEA WITH GOAL OF EVENTUALLY TRANSFERRING IT TO THAT ORGANIZATION.

4. PROLIFERATION- RESISTANT FUEL CYCLE: RAMANNA NOTED THAT INDIA

HAS LONG BEEN COMMITTED TO SPECIFIC, PHASED DEVELOPMENT OF ITS NUCLEAR POWER PROGRAM, WHICH IS BASED ON ITS PARTICULAR NEEDS AND RESOURCES. HE SAW LITTLE SCOPE FOR CHANGING FROM EVOLUTION THAT TAKES INDIA FROM CANDU TO FAST BREEDER WITH THORIUM BLANKET. NYE NOTED THAT INFCEP MIGHT REVEAL OPPORTUNITIES TO INTRODUCE MORE PROLIFERATION- RESISTANT TECHNOLOGY IN LATER STAGES OF THEIR PROGRAM.

NOTE BY OC/T: PARA 1 AS RECEIVED.

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 040916Z AUG 77
FM AMCONSUL BOMBAY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7529
INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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5. FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS: SETHNA CLAIMED THAT SO MANY DEFINITIONS OF SAFEGUARDS FLOATING ABOUT THAT HE NEEDED TO PIN DOWN EXACTLY WHAT US HAS IN MIND BEFORE HE COULD ANALYZE THEIR AFFECT ON DEVELOPMENT HIS PROGRAM. HE STRONGLY ATTACHED SOVIET-UK MODEL FOR SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT, INDICATING IT COULD STIFLE DEVELOPMENT NATIONAL PROGRAMS. IN RESPONSE, NYE SAID HE WOULD SEND NOTE CONFIRMING THAT SAFEBUARDS PROGRAM DESCRIBED IN INFCIRC 153 WOULD MEET REQUIREMENTS OF OUR LEGISLATION.

6. REPROCESSING AT TARAPUR: IN RESPONSE TO SETHNA'S QUERY AS TO WHETHER US WOULD AGREE TO REPROCESSING AT TARAPUR IF INDIA ACCEPTS FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS, NYE SAID WE HAD ALREADY INFORMED NRC THAT WE HAD REJECTED INDIA'S REQUEST FOR A JOINT DETERMINATION ON PREFRE. NYE EXPLAINED THAT WE DO NOT SEE HOW WE COULD ENDORSE HANDLING PURE SEPARATED PLUTONIUM AT PRESENT TIME. THIS IS WHY WE HAVE DELAYED COMPLETION OF BARNWELL. TO ENDORSE REPROCESSING SPENT FUEL OF AMERICAN ORIGIN ABOARD WHILE REFUSING REPROCESSING AT HOME WOULD CREATE

GREAT PROBLEMS.

7. JAPANESE-US TALKS ON REPROCESSING: INDIANS WONDERED WHY
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JAPANESE REPROCESSING OF TOKAI SPENT FUEL, IF WE AGREE TO IT, COULD NOT SERVE AS A PRECEDENT FOR TARAPUR FUEL. NYE POINTED OUT TKHYGJAPAN IS A SIGNATORY OF NPT AND HAS DEPENDED ON US FUEL FOR DEVELOPMENT OF MOST OF ITS EXTENSIVE NUCLEAR PROGRAM. MOREOVER, IF APPROVAL GIVEN (HE STRESSED MATTER NOW BEFORE PRESIDENT AND DOES NOT KNOW HOW IT WILL BE DECIDED), IT WILL MOST LIKELY BE TEMPORARY AND DESIGNED TO GIVE TIME TO GET EXPERIENCE WITH ATTEMPT TO CONVERT TO MORE PROLIFERATION-RESISTANT TECHNOLOGY.

8. SPENT FUEL STORAGE: NYE EMPHASIZED THAT PRESIDENT DOES NOT WANT INFCEP TO INTERFERE WITH COOPERATION UNDER EXISTING BILATERALS AND THEREFORE US IS SERIOUSLY INTERESTED IN HELPING INDIA TO OVERCOME CURRENT SPENT FUEL STORAGE PROBLEMS AT DCHARAPUR. MOST PROMISING SOLUTION APPEARS TO BE HIGH-DENSITY, POISON RERACKING AND NYE ASSURED HIM WE WILL ASSIST IN HELPING DAE FIND US FIRM THAT CAN DESIGN AND HELP PROCURE BORON RACKS THAT CAN BE INSTALLED WITHIN NEXT YEAR. SETHNA EMPHASIZED THAT UNLESS RACKS CAN BE PUT IN WITHIN SEVEN TO EIGHT MONTHS THERE WILL HAVE TO BE SOME MORE CUT-BACK IN TARAPUR'S POWER OUTPUT, WHICH COULD LEAD TO EMBARRASSING QUESTIONS IN PARLIAMENT. NEVERTHELESS, HE MOST APPRECIATIVE NYE'S REASSURANCES AND EXPECIALLY GRATEFUL FOR PROMPT HELP OUR CONSULTANT KIEFER CURRENTLY EXTENDING.

9. ON AUGUST 3, NYE AND VAN DOREN VISITED TARAPUR REACTOR AND BHABA ATOMIC RESEARCH CENTER. FOR FIRST TIME IN YEARS, IAEC CHAIRMAN SETHNA PERSONALLY ESCORTED AMERICAN VISITORS ON THE LONG DRIVE TO TARAPUR. IN FRIENDLY, PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS, SETHNA CONFIRMED THAT TOP OFFICIALS OF GOI ARE UNDERTAKING FRESH EXAMINATION OF FULL-SCOPE SAFEGUARDS IN EFFORT TO FIND WAYS TO ACCOMMODATE NEW AMERICAN NUCLEAR POLICY. MAJOR PURPOSE OF TARAPUR VISIT WAS TO ASSESS SPENT-FUEL
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STORAGE PROBLEM WHICH IS INDEED IN NEED OF QUICK RESOLUTION IF DEEP CUTS IN POWER OUTPUT ARE TO VE AVOIDED. THIS MATTER WILL BE SUBJECT OF SEPTTEL REPORTING RESULTS OF KIEFFER VISIT. COURTNEY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NUCLEAR ENERGY, VISITS, NEGOTIATIONS, NUCLEAR SAFEGUARDS, MEETING PROCEEDINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 04-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Litigation History:
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Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
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Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 77 BOMBAY 1848
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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Review Event:
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1713391
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NYE VISIT TO BOMBAY: DISCUSSION WITH DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY
TAGS: MNUC, TECH, OTRA, IN, (NYE, JOSEPH)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/92b2fc61-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009